Remarks

Claim 1 has been amended to recite that the WFMS database "contains as an object" at least one process model or an instantiation of the process model and that the method comprises the step of transferring "said object" from the WFMS database to an archive database. Claim 1 as amended thus makes it clear that the object that is transferred to the archive database is one of the previously named objects: i.e., either a process model or an instance thereof.

Claims 2-5 and 8-10 have been amended to agree with the changes in claim 1. Claim 11 has been amended to replace "whereas" with "wherein", which is believed to be the more appropriate word here; no substantive change in intended.

Claims 1, 2, 8 and 11-13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,930,512 to Boden et al. (Boden) (paper no. 2, ¶ 2, page 2). Claims 3, 4, 6, 7, 9 and 10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Boden in view of U.S. Patent 6,067,548 to Cheng (paper no. 2, ¶ 4, page 3). Finally, claim 5 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Boden in view of Cheng and U.S. Patent 4,864,569 to DeLucia et al. (DeLucia) (paper no. 2, ¶ 4, page 6).

Claim 1 as amended is directed to a method of optimizing a workflow management system (WFMS) that is executable by the WFMS on at least one computer system. The WFMS accesses a WFMS database containing as an object at least one process model or an instantiation of the process model (process instance). In accordance with the method, the object—i.e., a process model or one of its instantiations—is transferred from the WFMS database to an archive database.

Boden describes a method and apparatus for building and running workflow process models using a hypertext markup language such as HTML. Beginning at column 7, line 65, the patentees discuss an insurance example involving an application for a life insurance policy. In the course of execution of one of the activities making up that example, the insurance application is archived (Fig. 1: 324, col. 9, lines 16-17).

Boden has a superficial similarity to applicants' system in that it relates to workflows and process models and discusses archiving. However, Boden is merely archiving the data[1] (the insurance application) being managed by the insurance model shown in Fig. 1-5, and even then only because the application implementing the "Archive Application" activity 324 is doing the archiving.

Some further explanation may be helpful here. A business process consists of a set of activities. An activity is typically implemented via an executable of some type. When a WFMS of the prior art carries out a business process, it navigates through the business process from one activity to the next. When an activity is being carried out, the WFMS invokes the associated executable. The executable does whatever it is programmed to do, including accessing some data in some data store, and when completed, returns to the WFMS. The WFMS then continues navigation through the business process. Therefore, other than launching an executable, a WFMS does not concern itself with what the executable does.[2] In Boden, for example, the WFMS would not even know that a life insurance application is being archived at step 324. Rather, that would be the concern of whatever application performed the "Archive Application" activity at step 324.

Thus, there is no notion in Boden of archiving either the process model itself or an instance of that model as claimed by applicants, nor is there any notion generally of archiving anything at that level. While the application implementing activity 324 may archive particular data that it handles, it has no similar ability to archive itself or the process level or process instance containing the activity, nor would the application be expected to have such an ability.

Neither of the remaining references cures the deficiencies of Boden as a primary reference. Cheng describes a "dynamic organizational database" that is said to be an improvement over workflow management systems and other business process management (BPM) systems of the

[1] This is akin to applicants' described step of archiving data from an application store, which is consistently distinguished from archiving objects from the WFMS database itself (page 2, line 29 to page 3, line 7; page 10, line 27 to page 10, line 12).

[2] This is also noted at page 11, lines 9-10 of the specification. While Fig. 7 shows the specification of archiving and restoring programs for each activity at the process model level, this figure represents applicants' invention and not the prior art.

prior art. Cheng speaks of a "forgotten state" in which information relating to a "member object" (Fig. 5) is archived or deleted (Fig. 6: 128; col. 5, lines 15-16; col. 8, lines 31-50). However, the one example of a member object that is given here is that of an employee who has left the enterprise (col. 8, lines 38-41), which is similar to the example of the insurance application given in Boden. Like Boden, Cheng fails to teach archiving process models or instances as distinguished from the data managed by such objects. Certainly, Cheng does not teach transferring a process instance or process model of a WFMS database, as the Examiner apparently argues in applying the reference to claims 3 and 4 (paper no. 2, pages 3 and 4).

DeLucia relates to a software verification and validation configuration management system. A new software release is archived in a software library (Fig. 1B: 14) when verification impact analysis has been satisfactorily performed (col. 4, lines 54-57). In this system, the software[3] being verified is more akin to data—it is being tested rather than run productively. The software is not a process instance, nor is it selected from among instances of a process model, as suggested by the Examiner (paper no. 2, page 6). Indeed, if there is any "workflow" evident in DeLucia, it is the verification procedure itself (Figs. 1A-1B) and not the software being verified. Accordingly, DeLucia, like Boden and Cheng, fails to teach archiving process models or instances as distinguished from the data managed by such objects, as claimed by applicants.

[3] The patent characterizes the software as being for the control of safety-related operations in a nuclear power plant (col. 1, lines 21-22), but its exact function is not described and is irrelevant to the working of DeLucia's invention.

Conclusion

Reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested. It is hoped that upon such consideration the Examiner will hold all claims allowable and pass the case to issue at an early date. Such action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,
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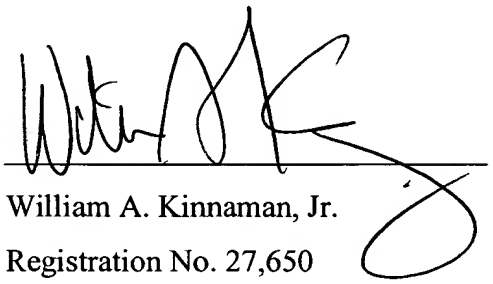
By 

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